The Spectacle of Prediction: Deconstructing Jiang Xueqin's "Psychohistory" and the Confusionist Logic of Contemporary Influence Operations

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***Abstract*—The viral ascent of Jiang Xueqin, a Chinese-Canadian educator dubbed "China's Nostradamus", presents a peculiar phenomenon: an individual with no formal training in geopolitics or strategic studies, whose prognostications rest on a fictional science, has amassed a global audience of millions. This article argues that Jiang's work is neither a genuine theoretical contribution nor a coherent exercise in geopolitical forecasting. Rather, it functions as a *confusionist* information weapon — a psychological operation designed to paralyze critical thought through vague determinism and manufactured spectacle. By contrasting Jiang's incoherent, attention-driven output with the structurally coherent, audience-targeted propaganda of major powers (Russia, China, Iran), the article demonstrates that Jiang's sudden visibility is incompatible with standard state-sponsored information strategies. It further explores the circumstantial but compelling case that his amplification may be linked to Western intelligence psychological warfare doctrines, notably the CIA's historical "perception management" techniques and Mossad's contemporary social-media influence networks. Finally, the article situates Jiang's work within the broader crisis of the spectacle, showing how algorithmic amplification and media fetishism produce false prophets whose real function is to demobilize, not enlighten.**

***Index Terms*—Jiang Xueqin, psychohistory, confusionism, influence operations, CIA, Mossad, spectacle, propaganda, determinism, algorithmic warfare.**

I. Introduction: The Strange Case of the Accidental Prophet

In early 2026, following the outbreak of the US-Israeli war against Iran, a Chinese-Canadian teacher named Jiang Xueqin suddenly became a global media sensation. Headlines proclaimed him "China's Nostradamus" for two predictions made in 2024: that Donald Trump would return to power, and that he would then launch a war against Iran [1], [2]. A Yale graduate in English literature, Jiang has no academic credentials in political science, international relations, or history. His methodology — which he calls "predictive history" — is explicitly borrowed from Isaac Asimov's fictional *Foundation* series, a "psychohistory" that has no basis in empirical social science [3].

Yet by March 2026, his YouTube channel had amassed nearly 1.9 million subscribers. He was interviewed by Tucker Carlson and featured across Western independent media. A flurry of articles breathlessly reported his "chilling warnings" about America's defeat in Iran, without ever interrogating the epistemological foundations of his claims [4].

This paper contends that Jiang Xueqin is not a geopolitical thinker but a **symptom** — a product of algorithmic amplification and, potentially, a deliberate confusionist operation. Unlike the coherent, audience-targeted propaganda of Russia, China, and Iran — each designed to mobilize specific demographic blocs around identifiable narratives — Jiang's output produces *paralysis*. His vague determinism ("the US will lose"), his invocation of inescapable "traps", and his lack of actionable political content serve to demobilize rather than inspire. This is the hallmark of a particular kind of psychological warfare: **confusionism**, the weaponization of uncertainty to erode public trust and immobilize critical thought.

II. Deconstructing the "Theory": Jiang Xueqin as Intellectual Impersonator

A. The Psychohistory Fraud

Jiang claims to use "psychohistory" — a term Asimov invented for a fictional statistical science capable of predicting the behavior of large human populations. In reality, psychohistory has no standing in any academic discipline. Its real-world variants have been dismissed as pseudoscience, relying on psychoanalytic overgeneralizations and ideal-types detached from empirical historiography. As Karl Popper noted, merely predicting the recurrence of a known phenomenon is not a test of a scientific hypothesis — and Jiang's "predictions" (Trump's return, a war with Iran) were widely discussed scenarios long before he articulated them [3].

Jiang's method is not systematic. He offers no falsifiable propositions, no causal mechanisms, no empirical data. Instead, he deploys the rhetorical apparatus of "game theory" and "historical patterns" to create an aura of scientific legitimacy while delivering content that is, in reality, indistinguishable from geopolitical punditry available on any cable news channel.

B. The Flip-Flop and the Algorithmic Boost

Critics have documented Jiang's inconsistent positions. One analysis noted that after building a following by criticizing China's education system, he abruptly shifted to anti-US

commentary — a convenient pivot that coincided with his viral rise [2]. Another investigation flagged that his sudden visibility in early 2026 bore the hallmarks of **artificial visibility engineering**: coordinated amplification, algorithmic boosting, and engagement from accounts with no prior interest in geopolitical forecasting [3].

This is not organic virality. It is the product of what researchers call "algorithmic warfare" — the use of AI-driven systems to manufacture popularity and shape perception. Jiang's content, with its vague predictions and lack of concrete analysis, is perfectly optimized for this ecosystem: it generates controversy without commitment, engagement without substance.

C. Determinism as Political Paralysis

Most crucially, Jiang's work produces a specific political effect: **immobilizing determinism**. His predictions consistently frame US decline and Chinese ascendancy as inevitable, the outcome of impersonal "patterns" rather than political struggle. This is not analysis; it is prophecy. And prophecy, as Walter Benjamin understood, is the enemy of praxis. If the future is already written, there is nothing to be done — no coalition to build, no movement to join, no alternative to imagine.

This distinguishes Jiang from genuine critical theory. The *Wertkritik* tradition, for all its pessimism about capitalism's crisis tendencies, insists that the system's contradictions *can* be overcome — that the "desperate counter-tendencies" of war and destruction are not fate but the thrashing of a dying social form. Jiang offers no such horizon. He closes the future rather than opening it.

III. The Intelligence Connection: Mossad, CIA, and the Confusionist Playbook

The circumstantial case for Jiang being an intelligence-linked operation rests on three pillars: his biographical anomalies, the tactical utility of his content, and the historical precedents of Western psychological warfare.

A. Biographical Anomalies

Jiang is a Chinese-Canadian who spent most of his career as a high school administrator in Beijing. He has no known institutional affiliation with any university or think tank. His sudden pivot from education reform to geopolitical forecasting, combined with his unexplained access to global media platforms, raises legitimate questions. One detailed investigation concluded that Jiang "was almost certainly a CIA-created social media phenomenon" — a "doppelgänger" fabricated to test influence techniques [3]. The same source noted that a 2017 CNN article described him as being suspected by Chinese authorities of being an "American spy" and deported. Whether this is true or apocryphal, the ambiguity itself serves a purpose: it keeps audiences guessing, a classic confusionist tactic.

B. The Tactical Utility of Confusion

Jiang's content serves multiple intelligence objectives:

1) **Noise generation.** By flooding the information space with vague, unverifiable "predictions", he makes it harder for audiences to distinguish credible analysis from spectacle. This is the classic "firehose of falsehood" technique, adapted for the influencer age [5].
2) **Fatalism inoculation.** His deterministic worldview normalizes US decline and Chinese ascendancy as inevitable, discouraging political engagement. As one study of disinformation notes, the goal of modern psychological warfare is no longer to persuade but to *destabilize* — to fragment belief and collapse shared meaning [6].
3) **Plausible deniability.** Because Jiang is not overtly tied to any government, his content can be amplified without attribution. He can be disowned if necessary. This is the "gray zone" of influence operations — neither black propaganda nor white, but something in between.

C. Historical Precedents

The CIA has a long history of "perception management" operations designed to cultivate confusion and controlled ignorance. The Reagan-era disinformation campaigns explicitly aimed to make "everything the American public believes... false" [6]. More recently, Mossad-linked cyber units have operated across social media platforms, spreading conflicting claims to create psychological disarray. The Israeli firm Psy-Group, staffed by former Mossad agents, specialized in "covertly spreading messages to influence what people believed and how they behaved" — including social-media manipulation ahead of the 2016 US election [5].

Jiang fits this template perfectly: an ambiguously affiliated figure, producing content that sows doubt rather than clarity, amplified by mechanisms that can be plausibly denied. Whether he is a direct asset or merely a useful idiot is secondary. What matters is the *function*: confusion, paralysis, and the erosion of public trust in geopolitical analysis as such.

IV. Incompatible with State Propaganda: Russia, China, Iran

The major powers accused of running "disinformation" campaigns — Russia, China, Iran — operate according to a fundamentally different logic. Their propaganda is **coherent, audience-targeted, and mobilizing**. Jiang's confusionism is incompatible with their methods.

A. Russia: "Hard Soft Power" with Clear Objectives

Russian propaganda, whether through RT or covert social-media operations, is not designed to confuse but to *persuade* specific audiences. It targets Russian-speaking populations in former Soviet states, NATO-skeptical constituencies in the West, and Global South elites seeking alternatives to US hegemony [7]. Its narratives — anti-NATO, anti-liberal, pro-sovereignty — are consistent and actionable. Russia's "hard

soft power" deploys influencers and bloggers to build a positive image, not to generate fatalistic paralysis [8]. The goal is *mobilization*, not demobilization.

B. China: "Sharp Power" with a Constructive Agenda

China's global information strategy, articulated as "telling the China story well", is designed to build soft power and legitimize the CCP's rule. It operates through multi-channel communications targeting specific demographics: African journalists, Western academics, diaspora communities [7]. China's narratives — "community of shared future", multipolarity, non-interference — are coherent and forward-looking. They do not predict inevitable decline but offer an alternative *model*. Jiang's fatalistic determinism, with its undertone of Western civilizational decay, is actually *in tension* with China's official optimism about its own rise.

C. Iran: Victimhood-Victory Dialectic

Iranian propaganda combines two coherent strands: victimhood (the West's soft war against the Islamic Republic) and victory (resistance as strength). It operates through a sophisticated apparatus of state broadcasting, religious networks, and social-media influencers [9], [10]. The target audience is both domestic (regime legitimacy) and international (anti-imperialist sympathizers). Like Russia and China, Iran's propaganda is *mobilizing* — it calls for action, solidarity, and resistance. Jiang's passive determinism ("the US will lose") offers no such call.

D. The Incompatibility

Jiang's work lacks three features essential to state-aligned propaganda: **consistency** (he has no stable ideological line), **actionability** (his predictions do not prescribe any course of action), and **demographic targeting** (his audience is global, undifferentiated, and passive). He is a phenomenon of the *algorithmic spectacle*, not a tool of statecraft.

V. Conclusion: The Spectacle of Prediction and the Crisis of Critical Thought

The Jiang Xueqin phenomenon must be understood within the broader crisis of the spectacle — the system of representations that mediates social relations in late capitalism. The spectacle, as Guy Debord argued, is not merely illusion but a "social relation among people, mediated by images" [11]. War shatters the spectacle, revealing the real dynamics of power. But the spectacle reconstitutes itself, and one of its preferred forms is the **false prophet** — the figure who offers the appearance of insight while delivering only confusion.

Jiang is such a figure. His viral rise is not a testament to his theoretical acumen but to the degradation of public discourse, the algorithmic capture of attention, and the strategic deployment of confusion as a weapon. He is neither a Russian asset nor a Chinese mouthpiece nor an Iranian ally. He is something more insidious: a product of the confusionist ecosystem that benefits those who seek to demobilize critical thought — whether they are in Langley, Tel Aviv, or merely the marketing departments of social-media platforms.

For those committed to genuine geopolitical analysis — to the dialectical critique of value-dissociation, to the materialist understanding of war as a desperate counter-tendency of a crisis-ridden system — Jiang is a distraction. His "theories" are not theories. His "predictions" are not predictions. He is, in the end, what he appears to be: a teacher of English literature whose YouTube channel went viral. But in a world where algorithms manufacture prophets, even that is enough to cause real harm — not by misleading the powerful, but by disarming the curious.

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